

THE SIXTH DAY.

18th February 1911.

SUBJECTS.

The Assembly met again at 11 A. M. on Saturday, the 18th February.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS.

64. Changes needed in the Revised Assembly Rules.

Mr. K. Narayana Pillai (Member, Ambalapuzha Taluk) said that the first modification that he had to propose was the alteration of the date of the meeting prescribed in Rule XXIV from Kumbham to Kanni in each year. It was not because of any personal inconvenience or pecuniary loss that he advocated the change, but since the Assembly took its name after His Highness the Maha Raja, the desire of the people was that it should have its sittings in Kanni, immediately after His Highness' Birthday, as was the case before.

Dewan.—The chief ground on which the change was effected was that it would enable the Government to place in the hands of the Members copies of the Administration Report of the preceding official year, before they made their representations. The Annual Report would not be ready before December. Another reason was that, in the previous Assemblies, some of the Members had complained that they were being detained in Trivandrum during the agricultural season.

Member.—The Member said that he only made the suggestion for the consideration of the Government and that he would not press the change, if it was in any way inconvenient to them.

The next modification was about the reduction in the number of Taluk Members under Rule I A. With the increase in the population of the taluks, there would be an increase in their wants and requirements. He therefore requested that each taluk might be allowed the privilege of representing its wants through two Members instead of one. If that request could not be granted, he suggested, as an alternative measure, that four subjects might be permitted to be brought forward by the Members of those taluks which were allowed to return only one Member.

The Member next referred to the restriction in Rule XXI that no Member should speak upon a subject for

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more than 15 minutes. He said that there was no difficulty experienced by any Member during the current Assembly on account of this rule, nor was there any room for apprehension that the rule would be used against the Members in the near future. But, in his opinion, the retention of a specific provision of the kind in the Rules was not desirable, since the enforcement of the rule meant a curtailment of the liberty of a Member and the usefulness of the Assembly; and as there could be no objection to omit the rule if a rigid enforcement of it was not contemplated, the Member requested that the limitation about time might be wholly removed.

Mr. K. Atchuthan Pillai, B. A., B. L. (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) said that the number of Members should be increased, so as to give a more representative character to the Assembly and that the number allowed formerly would be quite sufficient. The general desire of the people was that, in course of time, the districts should be made more representative and the number of Members increased. The number should not be less than two for each taluk, and, in important taluks, it might be raised to three or four according to necessity.

The next amendment was in Rule XVIII which limited the number of subjects for each Member to two. He said that the restriction was a real grievance and a disability, and he requested that it might be cancelled and each Member permitted to bring up as many subjects as he liked.

The Member next said that there was no necessity for a special provision, as was contained in Proviso 2 to Rule VIII, as the disqualifications specified in the Rule were sufficient. In the opinion of the Member, the proviso contained a dangerous power and should be omitted.

Schedule A, para 1 (c), laid down the restriction that a graduate should be of not less than 10 years' standing to become qualified to elect or to be elected as a Member. The principle on which the right was granted was property or educational qualification. The provision in Rule VIII regarding age restriction was sufficient to guard against any person of immature intellect being elected. He requested that every graduate should, in virtue of such qualification, be declared eligible. Ordinarily, a graduate would be 19 years old, and the 6 years' time before the age of 25 was reached ought to be enough for him to study the wants of a taluk and represent them at the Assembly. Para 2 of the same

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Schedule declared that "no person shall be entitled to vote except in the taluk in which he resides." A man might be permanently resident in one taluk because he had his means of living there, but all his interests might nevertheless be in another taluk where he owned landed property. He might not pay any tax in his place of residence. Local residence should not therefore go against the man. The man in such cases should be allowed to vote either in his place of residence or in the place where he owned property. Para 5 of the Schedule laid down that, if tax was paid in the name of a woman, the senior male member alone could be entered in the electoral list and that only if he was otherwise qualified. If not so qualified, as for instance by being a Government servant, the Tarwad could not be represented at all under the rule. In such cases, the members of the family should be allowed to choose any member they liked. That principle was recognised in para 4, *i. e.*, in cases where tax was paid in the names of several persons as joint-holders of land. He therefore requested that the same principle might be extended to cases coming under para 5.

In regard to the time limit prescribed in Rule XXI, he said that he completely agreed with Mr. Narayana Pillai that the restriction should be removed.

As to Rule XIX, the Member said that only some of the prohibited subjects were mentioned in it. He said that a complete list of the prohibited subjects should be drawn up and appended to the rule. He had no objection to any of the subjects already specified in the rule, but he desired that the scope of the rule should be narrowed down as much as possible and a definite list attached to the rule.

The Member then requested that the Members of the Assembly might be granted the *right* of electing the non-official Members of the Legislative Council. He said that, in Mysore, the Members of the Representative Assembly were recently given the privilege of electing two of the non-official Members to the Council. There was a prospective vacancy in the Trivandrum Division and he hoped that the Government would extend to the Members of the Trivandrum Division the same privilege that had been accorded to the Members of the Kottayam Division. In his opinion, the principle of electing a Member for each Division would work well and no minority interest would be left out. He also suggested that the full number of Members provided by the Legislative Council Regulation should be worked up to. The Member had no objection

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to the Government reserving to themselves the right of nominating a Member to represent any community or interest not otherwise represented.

Mr. P. S. Maruthanayagam Pillai (Member, Kalkulam Taluk) said that, under Rule XVI, the election meetings were to be held in Thulam. That was the time for cultivation in South Travancore. Very few voters attended the election meetings on the last occasion, as compared with the previous years. He therefore suggested that the meetings might be held in the third week of Vrischikam.

He then said that the 15 minutes' time prescribed by Rule XXI for each subject was insufficient and that it should be raised to half an hour. It was, of course, open to the President to grant a further extension of time when required. He also suggested that the Assembly meetings might be held towards the close of Kumbhom, instead of at the beginning of that month.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestions of the several Members are noted for consideration.

65. Rest-houses for Christian travellers.

Mr. K. M. Mathulla Mappilla (Member, Nominated) stated that the subject was one that had been brought forward on many occasions by the Members of previous Assemblies. He said that he could not see the reason why Christian travellers should be denied accommodation in the *Satroms* into which both Brahmins and non-Brahmins were alike admitted. When the Government officers of the latter communities camped in the *Satroms* during circuit, the Christians freely went into the *Satroms* on matters of business. It was evident therefore that there was no objection to Christians entering the *Satroms*. If the objection related to the cooking of food, there were both Brahmin and non-Brahmin kitchens attached to most of the *Satroms*. If a Christian kitchen were similarly attached to the various *Satroms*, the *Satroms* could be made equally useful to all classes of the people. If Christians were denied admission on the ground of their being meat-eaters, the Member failed to see how flesh-eating non-Brahmins could be allowed to enter the *Satroms*. If there be any rule that meat could not be cooked in the *Satroms*, the Christians would have no objection to submit to the rule. The Member added that he had heard that flesh was prepared in some of the Sirkar *Satroms* in connection with the visits of certain distinguished guests. In these circumstances, he said that there was no justification for keeping the *Satroms* closed to the Christian community and he therefore prayed